

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 25, 2005

The Honorable David M. Walker  
Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

As you review the Department of Defense's (DoD) recommendations for base realignment and closure, we ask that you consider the following issues in your report to the President and Congress.

First, with enlistment numbers dropping, particularly within the National Guard, it is important to investigate the degree to which the DoD planned for the impact of realignments and closures on retaining trained Guard personnel and on recruiting additional personnel. For example, if these recommendations are approved, it does not appear that there will be a C-130 unit anywhere on the East Coast between Rhode Island and North Carolina. Is there a defined expectation for those maintenance crews, pilots, and associated support units given that there will not be a mission within 50 miles? We would also like to know whether the recommendations are likely to produce a net positive or negative impact on retention and recruitment in the Guard and Reserve.

Second, we are concerned that the Pentagon misrepresented the impact of realignments on Guard units. For example, the report lists the impact of removing all 8 C-130s at New Castle County Airport Air Guard Station as costing 47 military and 101 civilian jobs. In the information they sent to the base commander, however, they indicate that 512 military drill positions are impacted (enclosed for your review). This presents a radically different picture. It also calls into question the statistics that were used to assess economic impact. We hope you will look at both the validity of the personnel numbers and the validity of the economic impact analysis. Also, the proposal to realign A-10's does not appear to meet or conform to current Air Force's Air Expeditionary Force model on deployment. It is our belief that A-10s are fully funded through 2015. This proposal works only if these aircraft are retired before that time.

Third, to what degree was the actual performance of specific Guard units given consideration? It is our understanding that the Secretary of Defense is now using a capabilities assessment (for example, mission capable rates in the case of a flying unit) as the basis for force planning decisions. Obviously, the full ramifications of the DoD's decisions will be difficult to understand if the actual capabilities of Guard units were not considered in the realignment and closure process decisions.

Fourth, we would like to know to what degree the five principles agreed to by all of the Adjutants General and Guard leadership were upheld? These principles were agreed to at a meeting of the Adjutants General Association of the United States and then provided to the Air Force by Guard leadership. A copy of the AGAUS resolution is enclosed for your review. In cases where the principles were not upheld, were the impacts fully understood?

Finally, we would like to know if the force structure models used by the services to predict future needs fit with the anticipated Quadrennial Defense Review or the force structure plan presented by the Secretary of Defense to Congress as required by law. It is our understanding that many Air Force decisions may have been based on something called Future Total Force (FTF). This plan and its ramifications have not been officially submitted to Congress. We would like to know the extent to which FTF formed a basis for base realignment and closure decisions and what justification would permit any use of this unrefined and undisclosed plan.

We look forward to your review. If we can answer any questions regarding these areas of inquiry, please let us know or have your staff contact our staff.

Sincerely,

Joe Biden  
Harry Reid  
J. Lieberman  
Chris Dodd  
Mike Castle  
John B. Larson  
Jenny Reiberg

Tom Carper  
Max Baucus  
Carmen K. Reinhart  
John E. McCain  
Lamar Smith  
Tim Wirth  
Frank Lautenberg

Encls.